

**Joint statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs  
of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia**  
2 October 2013

The Foreign Ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia emphasize the importance of developing strong ties between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries, which is essential for stability and prosperity on the European continent. The Ministers express their appreciation of the determination of those Eastern Partnership countries – Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – which, despite some internal challenges, are progressing in the process of implementing political, social and economic reforms. The pace of reforms determines the intensity of cooperation, therefore partners most engaged in reforms benefit more from their relationship with the EU, in line with the “more for more” principle. They welcome the European choice and aspirations of these countries.

As to Ukraine, the Visegrad countries note the serious progress made in the reform process since the December 2012 Foreign Affairs Council as well as in the process of absorbing European standards and getting closer to the EU. The Ministers welcome the fact that European integration is a common desire of the Ukrainian leadership, opposition and civil society. Visegrad countries share the belief that through the process of implementing the Association Agreement including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA) Ukraine will not only make a substantial step towards fulfilling her European aspirations but will also contribute to strengthening sustainable democracy and stepping up economic modernization.

Visegrad countries are strongly in favour of Ukraine’s swift transition to the second phase of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan between the EU and Ukraine, with the ultimate goal of abolishing the visa regime, as soon as Ukraine meets the respective criteria.

Visegrad countries are committed to work together with Ukraine, in order to exploit the full potential of the Eastern Partnership and to establish the necessary political conditions for signing the AA/DCFTA and to assist in its widest possible provisional application soon after. They welcome the approval of the Association Agreement by the Government of Ukraine. At the same time, at this final stage of the preparation of Vilnius Summit, the Ministers expect the Government of Ukraine to intensify efforts on remaining open issues, above all the adoption of the legislation reforming the functioning of the Prosecutor’s office, improving the electoral legislation and addressing the issue of selective justice.

With a view to the above, Visegrad countries are convinced that the EU and Ukraine should seize this historic opportunity. They unequivocally support the signing of the AA/DCFTA in Vilnius and its widest possible provisional application which would equally serve the interests of Ukraine and EU Member States. The Ministers believe that the implementation of the AA/DCFTA is not in conflict with and not directed against the interests of third countries.

Source: MFA of Hungary